

Kohau rongorongo studies began early in the 19th century but the first fundamental work devoted solely to the Rapanui script appeared only in 1958, in the book by German scientist, Thomas S. Barthel (*Grundlagen zur Entzifferung der Osterinselschrift*) in which the author published the results of his research conducted between 1953-56. In spite of the fact that Barthel remained firm on his original point of view on the character of the Rapanui script (a proto-script as stated by N. N. Mikloukho-Maklay but in "telegraphic" style), his work until now is the basis for the study of Easter Island texts.

In Barthel's book there are all the materials needed for scientific decipherment: *rongorongo* grapheme catalogue, copies of all preserved hieroglyphic texts, the numeral transcription index (concordances) of signs and their ligatures in different texts, "Metoro's readings" from the materials of Archbishop T. Jaussen (preserved in the archives of SSCC, Rome), and also Barthel's own conclusions and reflections.

Forty years have passed since the publication by Barthel and, of course, some of his materials and documents need definition and correction. These may be made in the new edition of his book.

In spite of some imperfections, the corpus of graphemes includes not only simple signs but composite ligatures that serve to assist in deciphering, especially as there is no other more exact catalog.

Perhaps the creation of a new catalog is not necessary for the corpus of texts may be extended by new finds. Moreover, to invent new numbers for well-known scientific graphemes (as are made by our deciphering dilettante S.V. Rjabchikov) only confuses things and serves to muddy the waters.

The corpus of graphemes published by Barthel includes all known signs from the hieroglyphic texts. Its scheme is so convenient (cf. with periodical system of chemical elements by D. Mendeleev) that we can easily introduce amendments. Each decipherer can make corrections in the glyphs' system, keeping their numeration according to Barthel. The author of this article made a large number of corrections in Barthel's catalogue without changing the numeration. Following the advice of Y.V. Knorozov, a zero ("0") was added before every sign of the first 99 glyphs for more unity and to avoid mistakes (for example, 001, 002, etc.).

However this author found and proposes to introduce into the catalogue one glyph, not taken into account by Barthel. It is a vertical line so common on the Santiago Staff text. At times we find it is also on other *kohau rongorongo* texts in ligatures with other signs.

S.R. Fischer (1995a, b) designates it as a dividing line between groups of glyphs but I propose to determine it as sign #000 and include it as a more simple glyph at the beginning of the catalogue and before #001. I suppose this sign #000 represented a vertical or inclined line that can be read as *ta* (PPN *tā*, PMP *tak* (?) according to S.H. Elbert and M.K. Pukui) with possible translation in ancient Rapanui "to cut" (cf. Rap., Tah. *tā* "to beat, strike, tattoo, draw, write"; Tong., Sam. *tā* "to strike, beat, hit, cut, cut down"; Mao. *tā* "to

strike, beat with a stick, cut, tattoo, paint, a mark or sign"; Haw. *kā* "to hit, strike").

The evidence that vertical lines are not dividing elements, but rather a real glyph, is in its use on the tablet "Ika" from Madrid, a copy of which was kindly sent to me by F. Mellén Blanco for researching. On that tablet, the vertical line passed across some signs indicates that the line is part of the glyphs ligature. Glyph 000 (*ta*) enters frequently in ligature with glyph 022; 022-000 (*oka-ta*) "[He] dig- [he] cut". This reading of signs 000 and 022 was verified in all cases of their use in *kohau rongorongo* texts and is based on the vocabulary of Rapanui and other Polynesian languages. I will show this reading of sign 000 and 022 on one fragment of the Santiago Staff (J4). It is this that Fischer (1995a, b) uses as an example of proof of his view of the semantic of vertical lines as dividing signs in text J and other *kohau rongorongo* tablets.

The reading and translation proposed by me in the published texts P and Q from MAE-Kunstskammer (1995) proves, I think, that *kohau rongorongo* tablets are really texts of Rapanui songs in the ancient Rapanui language and the researchers ought not interpret the texts but search for more adequate reading and precise translation of every sign. Texts on tablets are hieroglyphic by their very character, so one simple sign corresponds to one simple element in the Rapanui language--a morpheme or syllable, as in each hieroglyphic system. For example, a simple glyph 076 (*ure*) cannot transmit the whole set of expression "*ki'ai ki roto ki*", as Fischer proposes. There are also some signs (as determinatives) without a reading and signs which introduce another sign. (cf. catalog of signs in Federova's work).

The following page contains Federova's translation of J3 and J4.

References

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